

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1-9. (canceled)

10. (previously presented): A system including an input/output interface with load balancing functionality for communicatively coupling a host and a target, comprising:

- a host including an input/output interface, the input/output interface including
  - a first data transfer route suitable for communicatively coupling the input/output interface to the host;
  - a second data transfer route suitable for communicatively coupling the input/output interface to a target;
  - a third data transfer route suitable for communicatively coupling the input/output interface to the target;
- a memory suitable for storing electronic data, the memory including a program of instructions; and
- a single controller communicatively coupled to the first data transfer route, the second data transfer route, the third data transfer route and the memory, the single controller suitable for performing the program of instructions, wherein the program of instructions configures the single controller to transfer data between the host and target utilizing a logical identifier included in a logical identifier table associated with the second data transfer route and the third data transfer route, the data transfer performed by utilizing the second data transfer route and the third data transfer route in a load balanced manner.

11. (original): The system as described in claim 10 wherein the second data transfer route and the third data transfer route are indicated by entries in a target routing table.

12. (original): The system as described in claim 11, wherein the target routing table includes a target routing entry indicating a data transfer route between the input/output interface and the apparatus.
13. (previously presented): The system as described in claim 12, wherein the route includes at least one of world wide node name and world wide port name.
14. (previously presented): The system as described in claim 12, wherein the target routing entry includes a physical address of the target
15. (original): The system as described in claim 10, wherein the apparatus is communicatively coupled to the target over at least one of a loop and fabric.
16. (previously presented): A method for providing a load-balancing function between a host and a target in a network environment by an input/output interface, comprising:
  - providing a logical identifier table by an input/output interface including a single controller, the logical identifier table including at least one logical identifier, the logical identifier suitable for referencing at least one physical address identifier of a target; and
  - managing communications between the host and the target by the input/output interface, the communications occurring over at least one of a first route and a second route of at least two routes communicatively coupling the input/output interface to the target so that the host transfers data by balancing data transferred utilizing the second route and the third route of the at least two routes.
17. (previously presented): The method as described in claim 16, wherein the logical identifier is associated with the physical address identifier included in a target routing table.

18. (previously presented): The method as described in claim 17, wherein the physical address identifier includes at least one of world wide node name and world wide port name.
19. (previously presented): The method as described in claim 16, wherein the input/output interface is communicatively coupled to the target over at least one of a loop and fabric.
20. (previously presented): The method as described in claim 19, wherein the single controller is suitable for managing the communications.
21. (previously presented): An input/output interface suitable for providing a load-balancing function between a host and a target in a network environment, comprising:
  - means for providing a logical identifier table by an input/output interface including a single controller, the logical identifier table including at least one logical identifier, the logical identifier suitable for referencing at least one physical address identifier of a target; and
  - means for managing communications between the host and the target by the input/output interface, the communications occurring over at least one of a first route and a second route of at least two routes communicatively coupling the input/output interface to the target so that the host transfers data by balancing data transferred utilizing the second route and the third route of the at least two routes.